



# Mini Diorama

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## TOOLS:

- [Cutting mat \(1\)](#)  
*self healing.*
- [Ruler \(1\)](#)
- [Scissors \(1\)](#)
- [X-Acto knife \(1\)](#)



## PARTS:

- [Shadow box frame \(1\)](#)  
*or shoe box.*
- [Cardstock \(1\)](#)  
*assorted colors.*
- [Foamcore board \(1\)](#)
- [Spray adhesive \(1\)](#)
- [Tape \(1\)](#)
- [Glue \(1\)](#)
- [Glue stick \(1\)](#)
- [Bone folder \(1\)](#)
- [Pencil \(1\)](#)
- [Wooden skewers \(1\)](#)  
*cut into small lengths.*
- [Figurine \(1\)](#)  
*I used a small deer figurine.*

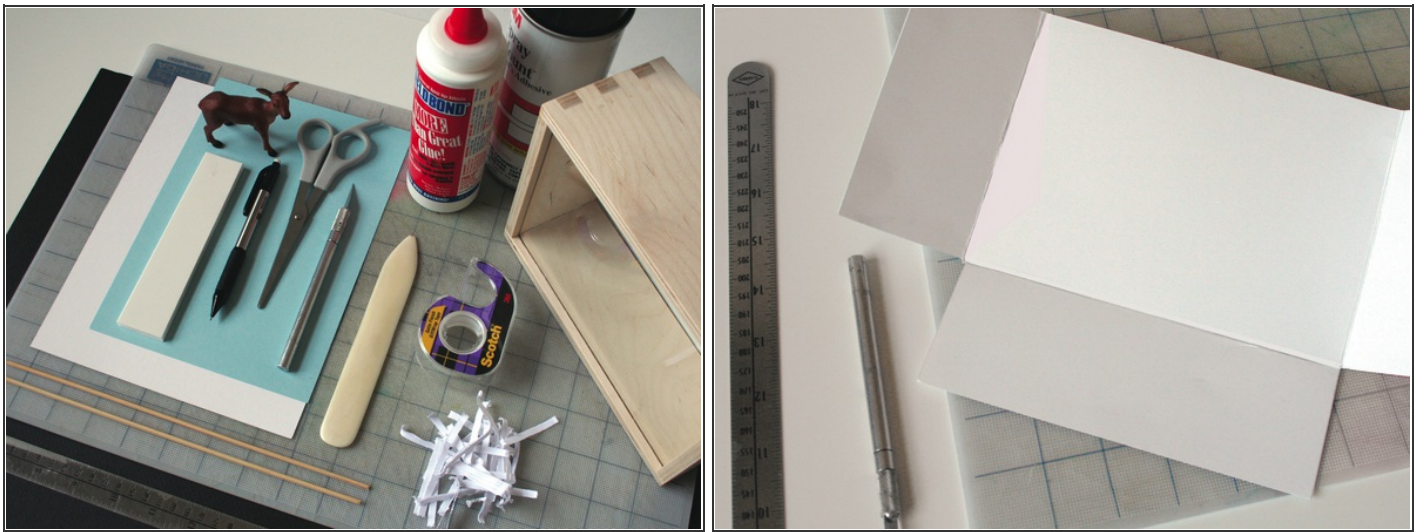
## SUMMARY

I made my first diorama when I was in elementary school, and years later, I still think they're

fun to make. For me, the best part is that the possibilities are endless. Lately, I've been working with cut paper illustrations, and since my projects are mostly inspired by nature, it's no surprise that I ended up combining those two aspects of my work here.

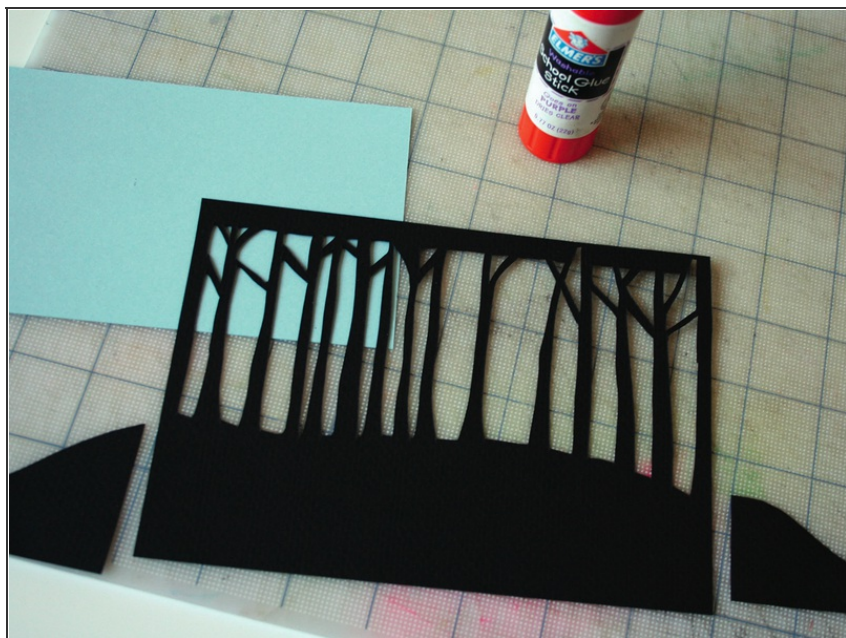
To get started, go through your old photos, illustrations, and doodles to see what most interests you, then start sketching your scene. You can be as creative as you like when it comes to materials: recycled magazines, swatches of fabric, gift wrap, and small figurines can all be used. Just start collecting and soon you'll have constructed your own little domain.

### Step 1 — Measure the box.



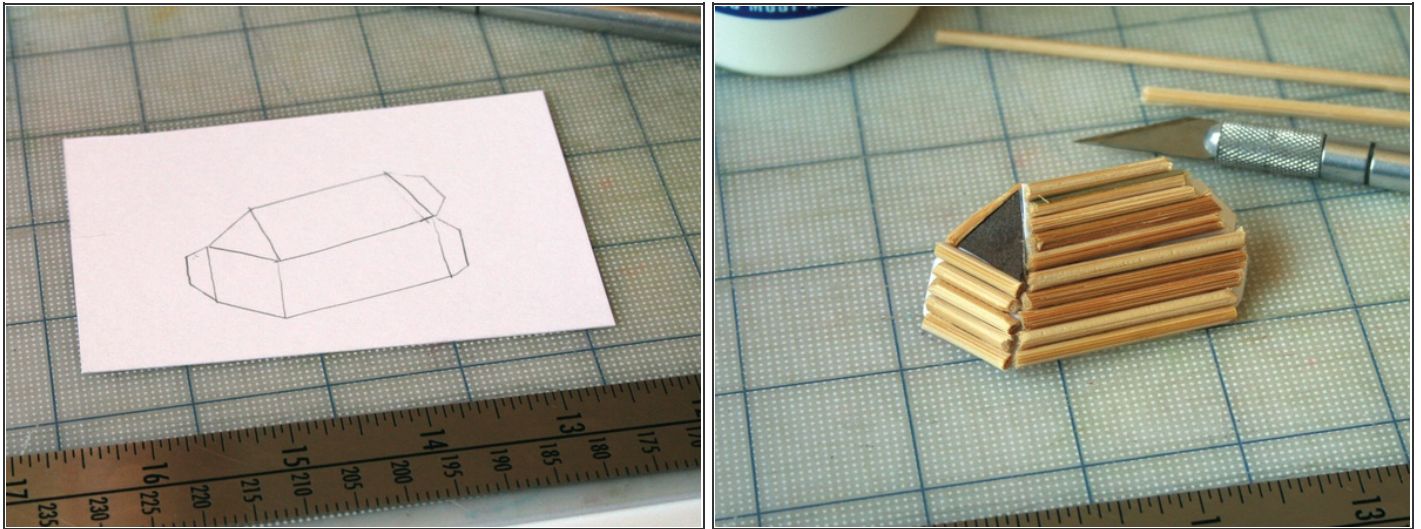
- Measure the inside of your shadow box frame. Use these dimensions to cut a stage out of white cardstock that will cover the bottom, back, and sides of your frame.
- Use a bone folder to fold for a nicer finish. If using a shoe box, you can simply build your scene from the back toward the front, without building a stage. When using a box frame with set glass, build your scene first, then slip it into the box.

## Step 2 — Create the background and background trees.



- Using the same measurements, create a blue background and attach it to the back and sides of the white cardstock with glue stick or spray adhesive. Don't use too much glue — large quantities may make the paper bubble.
- Once the blue paper is in place, turn the whole piece over on a clean surface and rub the entire area behind the blue paper so that it sticks evenly to the white background.
- With black cardstock, draw and cut out a scene of trees. Glue them to the blue background, turn the whole piece over, and rub as before. I cut 3 pieces each (for back and sides) of the black and blue papers instead of 1 long piece of each because when the scene is folded and upright, corners may bubble due to the thickness of the paper.

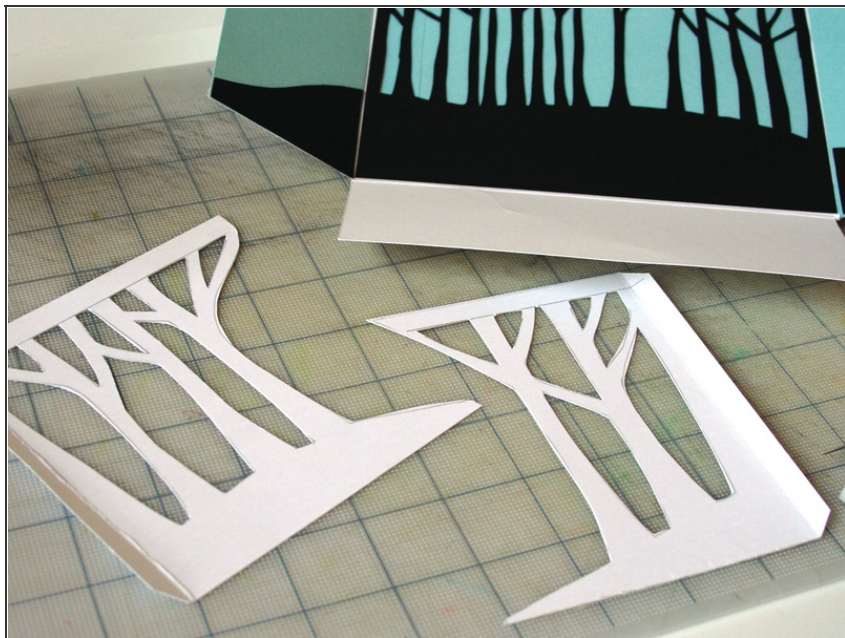
### Step 3 — Make the cabin.



- Draw an outline of the cabin with tabs on 3 sides. You'll use these to glue the cabin to the back of the diorama.
- The cabin is drawn at a slight angle to give an illusion of perspective. Cut out the cabin, then glue on small horizontal pieces of the cut wooden skewers (use the X-Acto knife or scissors to chop the wood).
- Cover everything except the tabs.
- Glue a small black paper triangle to the left end of the cabin. Set aside to dry completely.



## Step 4 — Make the foreground trees.



- Cut 2 sections of trees out of cardstock. The horizon line on these is lower than on the background trees, and the tree trunks are wider, which helps the illusion of perspective.
- Each tree section covers slightly less than half the width of the stage (but their bases overlap), and each has a tab on its outer edge. Fold the tabs toward the back.
- Cut two 1/4"-wide strips of foamcore board slightly shorter than the width of each of the foreground tree cutouts. Glue these foamcore braces to the back of the trees at the bottom, to give them more stability when they're glued to the base.

## Step 5 — Mount the pieces.



- Glue the cabin over the black background trees, close to their horizon line. Don't place it lower than the horizon line on the foreground trees. Tape the sides of the stage to the base so you'll be working with an upright scene for the final steps.
- Glue the right piece of the foreground trees about 1" from the background trees, making room for the cabin. They shouldn't touch each other; by leaving the small space between, you allow the foreground trees to cast shadows over the cabin.
- Glue the foreground trees on the left about 1/2" from the front of the stage. Place the deer temporarily to measure a comfortable distance for the placement of these trees. Make sure the deer's not too hidden behind the trees, but just peeking around them. Now glue the deer to the base of the stage.
- Let everything dry and then slowly slide your artwork into your frame. Enjoy!
- For more tips and variations, check out [http://craftzine.com/07/design\\_diorama](http://craftzine.com/07/design_diorama).

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This project first appeared in [CRAFT Volume 07](#), pages 103-105.

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